

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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A1 } 1. A computer readable memory having a plurality of storage locations for storing records in the computer readable memory, said memory comprising:
at least one structured workfolder for storing and organizing electronic documents;
said workfolder containing a contents element for storing primary data, said contents element containing one or more placeholders for indicating documents expected to be added to said workfolder via said placeholder.

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C3 } 2. The memory of claim 1, wherein said contents element further contains one or more section elements for categorizing said primary data.

3. The memory of claim 2, wherein said section elements contains one or more of a placeholder, a link to a document, and a nested section element.

4. The memory of claim 3, wherein said link identifies a document embedded in said workfolder.

5. The memory of claim 3, wherein said link identifies a document external to said workfolder.

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C4 } 6. The memory of claim 1, wherein said contents element further contains at least one link to a document.

7. The memory of claim 6, wherein said link identifies a document embedded in said workfolder.

8. The memory of claim 6, wherein said link identifies a document external to said workfolder.

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9. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a name field for indicating the data content of the document to be placed in the workfolder and a file object hook to which a primary data document can later be linked.

10. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a field containing limits on least one of the file name and file type of a primary data document which can be linked to said placeholder.

11. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a status element indicating a status for a document linked to said placeholder.

12. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises an assignment field indicating one or more users responsible for filling said placeholder.

13. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a deadline element including a field indicating a time period for taking a particular action associated with said placeholder.

14. The memory of claim 13, wherein said deadline element further comprises a triggering condition field for storing a triggering event and said indicated time period is relative to the occurrence of said triggering event.

15. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a comment element for storing information related to said placeholder.

16. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a position indicator indicating a position of said placeholder relative

to a plurality of other placeholders contained in said contents element.

17. The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a unique identifier.

18. The memory of claim 1, wherein said workfolder further comprises a tasks data element containing one or more tasks which define a set of steps required to complete a unit of work, each said task having a name field indicating a particular task to be performed and a status field indicating the status of said task.

19. The memory of claim 18, wherein said task element further comprises an assignment field for indicating one or more users responsible for performing said particular task.

20. The memory of claim 18, wherein said task element further comprises a deadline element including a field for indicating a time period for performing said particular task.

21. The memory of claim 20, wherein said deadline element further comprises a triggering condition field for storing a triggering event and said indicated time period is relative to the occurrence of said triggering event.

22. The memory of claim 1, wherein said workfolder further comprises meta-data related to the primary data stored under said contents node.

23. The memory of claim 22, wherein said meta-data comprises a history element for storing a log of changes made to said workfolder.

24. The memory of claim 23, wherein for each one of said changes made to said workfolder, said log contains data fields for including information

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indicating at least one of when the change was made, who made the change, what type of change was made, and the value/structure of the changed portion of the workfolder before and after the change.

25. The memory of claim 22, wherein said meta-data comprises a fields element for containing user-definable data fields relating to one or more properties of said workfolder.

26. The memory of claim 22, wherein said meta-data comprises a discussion element for containing user communications related to said work folder contents.

27. The memory of claim 22, wherein said meta-data comprises a script element for including one or more embedded computer program scripts which provide functions related to said workfolder when said scripts are executed by a computer.

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A2 { 28. A computer readable memory having a plurality of storage locations for storing records in the computer readable memory, said memory comprising:
a template used to create one or more particular instances of a structured workfolder for storing and organizing electronic documents;
said template containing a contents element;
said contents element containing a placeholder for indicating documents expected to be linked to said workfolder instance, said documents being linkable to said workfolder instance via a particular instance of said placeholder in said workfolder instance.

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C7 } 29. The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a tasks data element for containing one or more tasks which define a set of steps required to complete a unit of work associated with said workfolder

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instance, each said task having a name field for indicating a particular task to be performed and a status field for indicating the status of said task.

30. The memory of claim 28, wherein said contents element in said template further contains one or more section elements for categorizing data stored in said workfolder instance, each said section element having a name indicating its intended contents.

31. The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises meta-data related to said template.

32. The memory of claim 31, wherein said meta-data comprises a history element for storing a log of changes made to said workfolder template.

33. The memory of claim 32, wherein for each of said changes made to said workfolder, said log contains data fields for including information indicating at least one of when the change was made, who made the change, what type of change was made, and the value/structure of the changed portion of the workfolder template before and after the change.

34. The memory of claim 31, wherein said meta-data comprises a discussion element for containing user communications related to said workfolder template.

35. The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a script element including one or more embedded computer program scripts which provide functions related to said workfolder instance when said scripts are executed by a computer.

36. The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a fields element containing form data fields relating to one or more

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properties relevant to said workfolder instance.

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37. A method of creating in a computer readable memory a structured workfolder for organizing electronic documents comprising the steps of:

creating a structured workfolder root node, said root node containing a contents element for storing primary data therein; and

creating at least one placeholder for indicating documents expected to be linked to said workfolder via said placeholder.

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38. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating one or more section elements under said contents element for categorizing said primary data, each said section element having a name indicating its intended contents.

39. The method of claim 38, further comprising the step of associating said at least one placeholder with one of said section elements.

40. The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of creating one or more of a placeholder element, a link to a document, and a nested section element under said section element.

41. The method of claim 37, further comprising the steps of embedding the contents of a document in said workfolder and linking to said embedded document via said placeholder.

42. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of linking said workfolder to an external document via said placeholder.

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43. The method of claim 37, wherein the step of creating said at least one placeholder further comprises the steps of providing a name for said

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placeholder to indicate the data content of a document to be placed in said workfolder; and providing a file object hook in said placeholder to which said document can be linked.

44. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of providing limits on at least one of the file name and file type of a document which can be linked to said placeholder.

45. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a status element under said placeholder for indicating a status of work associated with creating a document to link to said placeholder.

46. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating an assignment element associated with said placeholder for indicating one or more users responsible for linking an appropriate document to said placeholder.

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47. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a deadline element including a field indicating a time period for taking a particular action associated with said placeholder.

48. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a comment element for storing information related to said placeholder.

49. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of providing each of said placeholders with a position indicator indicating a position of said placeholder relative to other placeholders contained in said workfolder.

50. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of providing said placeholder with a unique identifier.

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51. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a tasks data element for containing one or more tasks which defining a set of steps required to complete a unit of work, said tasks data element having, for each contained task, a name field for indicating a particular task to be performed and a status field for indicating the status of said task.

52. The method of claim 51, further comprising the step of creating an assignment field for a particular task contained in said tasks data element , said assignment field indicating one or more users responsible for performing said particular task.

53. The method of claim 51, further comprising the step of providing a deadline element associated with a particular task contained in said tasks data element, said deadline element including a field for indicating a time period for performing said particular task.

54. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating a meta-data element in said workfolder for storing meta-data related to the primary data stored under said contents node.

55. The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of creating a history data element associated with said meta-data element for storing a log of changes made to said workfolder.

56. The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of creating a fields element associated with said workfolder for containing user-definable data fields relating to one or more properties of said workfolder.

57. The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of creating a discussion element associated with said workfolder for containing user communications related to said workfolder contents.

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58. The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of creating a script element associated with said workfolder for including one or more embedded computer program scripts which provide functions related to said workfolder when said scripts are executed by a computer.

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